

# NEWS FROM ED MARKEY

**United States Congress**

**Massachusetts Seventh District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Rep. Markey, Supported by 9/11 Families, Fights to Close Loopholes in Aviation Security**

*Legislation Seeks to Remedy No-Fly Check List Mishaps*

**Washington, DC** – Four years after the September 11 attacks, the Bush Administration continues to drag its feet in addressing critical loopholes that still exist in aviation security. Today Representative Edward Markey (D-MA), a senior member of the House Committee on Homeland Security will introduce the ‘Strengthen Aviation Security Act,’ legislation aimed at improving aviation security throughout the United States. Rep. Markey’s legislation will address flaws in the current system that result in checking passengers names against the No-Fly list after flights have already taken off and target other critical loopholes that continue to make the U.S. vulnerable to another terrorist aviation attack.

“Almost four years after the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks, dangerous aviation security loopholes persist, putting passengers, crew members and our nation at risk of another 9/11-style strike. We have had warning sign after warning sign – two weeks ago a plane came within minutes of the White House and two flights have recently been diverted because suspected terrorists were believed to be on board. We need to tackle the vulnerabilities in our aviation security now. We need a policy that states ‘no wheels up’ until the terrorist watch list has been checked,” said Rep. Markey.

“The legislation that I am introducing today is designed to close security gaps that leave our country vulnerable to attack. While our skies are safer than they were before the 9/11 attacks, they are not as safe as they need to be – all the cargo carried on passenger planes still is not inspected; security at small airports is too porous to prevent a determined terrorist from stealing aircraft and using it as a flying bomb; access to sensitive areas beyond security checkpoints is not adequately controlled at every commercial airport across the country; and national security whistleblowers still do not have the protection from retaliation that they need to protect them when they will step forward to report security weaknesses when they observe them,” Rep. Markey said.

The Strengthen Aviation Security Act includes a range of aviation security improvements, such as:

- Calling on the Secretary of Homeland Security to promptly implement a policy to compare passenger information against the government ‘no-fly’ watch list before the departure of international flights into or out of the United States;
- Mandating full inspection of all air cargo on passenger planes within 3 years, according to a phased-in schedule (35% in FY06, 65% in FY07, 100% in FY07);
- Requiring that all general aviation aircraft, while parked at general aviation airports, are secured by visible immobilizing devices, such as a prop lock;

- Directing that all airport workers must be physically screened for prohibited items each time they enter a secured area of the airport;
- Extending Sarbanes-Oxley whistleblower protections to employees of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and other workers performing aviation security jobs for the Federal government.

Families of September 11, a non-profit organization founded by families of those who died in the 9/11 attacks, has endorsed Rep. Markey's bill stating that: "Families of September 11 stands committed to ensuring that our country learn from the gaps and failures of the past to make the American public as safe as possible against the threats that still face us today. Congressman Markey's legislation to strengthen aviation security is a solid step in this direction and we hope to see it passed in Congress without delay."

"As more time passes since the devastating September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, we must not become complacent. We know that Al Qaeda is patient and prepared to wait years as it plans its attacks. While we will never forget the horror of that clear September day, we also must take action to reduce our vulnerabilities and close dangerous aviation security loopholes," Rep. Markey concluded.

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